

## **Title IV Cosmetology Schools Dominate Graduate Output and Licensure Pass Rates, New Data Shows**

The cosmetology education landscape remains overwhelmingly shaped by institutions participating in the federal Title IV financial aid program. A review of recent Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data and aggregated state licensing examination results reveals that Title IV-eligible schools produce the vast majority of cosmetology graduates nationwide—and do so with measurably stronger licensure outcomes than their non-participating counterparts. These findings carry significant implications for policymakers, accreditors, and industry stakeholders evaluating the role of for-profit and Title IV institutions in workforce preparation.

During the 2022–23 school year, Title IV institutions produced 52,719 cosmetology graduates, with for-profit schools accounting for 72.6% of that total. According to IPEDS data referenced in a 2022 Century Foundation report, approximately 1,053 cosmetology schools—defined as institutions where more than half of programs are cosmetology programs—participated in Title IV during the 2019–20 academic year. Though modest fluctuations in the total number of participating institutions may have occurred due to openings and closures in subsequent years, overall institutional counts have remained relatively stable.

Beyond sheer graduate volume, Title IV-eligible institutions also demonstrate stronger performance on state licensing examinations. Aggregated licensing exam results across Arizona, California, Illinois, Maryland, Texas, and Virginia—states that collectively represent approximately 32.1% of the U.S. population—confirm that Title IV institutions account for the clear majority of cosmetology licensure activity. Across 2024 and 2025, Title IV schools generated roughly 75% of all licensed graduates, producing 60,624 exam passes compared to 20,658 for non-Title IV institutions. Title IV schools also delivered higher pass rates, achieving 69.9% compared to 64.9% for non-Title IV institutions—a margin of 5.02 percentage points.

Taken together, these data points underscore the central role that Title IV-participating cosmetology schools play in preparing students for licensure and professional practice. For regulators and accrediting bodies weighing program integrity and student outcomes, the evidence suggests that Title IV participation correlates not only with greater scale but also with modestly superior examination performance. Industry stakeholders should monitor how these findings inform ongoing debates over gainful employment regulations, institutional accountability frameworks, and the future of federal financial aid eligibility for vocational programs.